



Dharma in the Modern World: Peace, Nonviolence, and Sarvodaya



Graphic Art by: Albert Haro



Broadly translated as ethics, law, religion, nature, virtue, or duty, 'dharma' is a multivalent Indic concept. It uniquely encompasses philosophical principles, ideas and ethical practices that are shared across diverse worldviews in schools of Indian thought, Dharma traditions provide rich resources to enhance the theory and practice of peace, nonviolence, and sarvodaya.





Greetings from California State University Fresno!

I am happy to share that the year 2023–24 was filled with new activities and achievements in the M.K. Gandhi Center: Inner Peace and Sarvodaya and the Jain and Hindu Dharma Endowed Chair initiatives. I take joy in approaching both initiatives organically and connect them in various community activities, in teaching, and in research. The principles of dharma and sarvodaya are central to the vision guiding both the Gandhi and Jain and Hindu Dharma Studies. We engaged

students, faculty, staff, and community members through various projects, lectures, and events, focusing on ahimsa [nonviolence], dharma, yoga, inner peace, and sarvodaya. The focus of all activities was interdisciplinary, and they involved a broad engagement with various departments at Fresno State. We offered a course on Jain, Hindu, and Asian-American Religions, which covers material at the intersection of Ethnic Studies, Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Asian-American Studies. Students in this course come from departments that range from Philosophy, Art, and Literature to Asian-American Studies, Social Science, Public Health, and Civil Engineering. A seminar course on the philosophy of peace and nonviolence focused on the work and contributions of various nonviolent leaders and thinkers Mahatma Gandhi.

The work of the Gandhi Center has been recognized both nationally and internationally. This is reflected, for example, in the fact that we received multiple requests from faculty from India who wish to apply for Fulbright fellowships to teach and conduct their research at Fresno State. Throughout the year, we collaborated with the Ethics Center and with various colleagues across campus, including from the Departments of Art, Design, and History, Criminology, African Studies, Asian American Studies, Mass Communication and Journalism, and Anthropology.

We are excited that our new colleague, Dr. Raja Rosenhagen, has joined Fresno State. He is teaching PAX courses that include the works of Gandhi and peace leaders as well as courses focusing on Jain, Hindu, and other Dharma traditions. Dr. Rosenhagen and I will work together to advance teaching, programming, and community outreach for uplifting both endowed initiatives and the PAX program. I am very pleased to have his support moving forward.

A summary of the material included:

- Student OpEds: Phil 170T: Philosophy of Peace and Nonviolence; students engaged with Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence and methods for building a culture of peace and uplift of all, along with other prominent leaders of peace in the United States.
- Student Graphic Arts Project (in collaboration with Professor Juan Karlo Muro, Department of Art, Design, and Art History)
- Some activities we organized on campus
- A photo gallery of some of the major events and student activities

Dr. Veena Howard is a Professor in the Department of Philosophy. She serves as the Director of the Gandhi Center and as Endowed Chair in Jain and Hindu Dharma.



Veena R. Howard



Veena R. Howard, Ph.D., is Professor of Asian Religious Traditions in the Department of Philosophy at California State University, Fresno. She also holds the Endowed Chair in Jain and Hindu Dharma and serves as the director of the M.K. Gandhi Center: Inner Peace and Sarvodaya. Her publications include the books, *Gandhi's Global Legacy: Moral Methods and Moral Challenges* (Lexington, 2023); *The Bloomsbury Research Handbook of Indian Philosophy and Gender* (ed.), (Bloomsbury, 2019); *Dharma, Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh Traditions of India* (ed.) (IB Tauris, 2017); and *Gandhi's Ascetic Activism: Renunciation and Social Action* (SUNY Press, 2013). She has also authored over three dozen peer-reviewed articles including, "The Nonviolence Conundrum: Political Peace and Personal Karma in Jain and Hindu Traditions" (*Religions*, 2023); "Non-violence as Love in Action: James Lawson's Transforming the Promise of Jesus' Love into a Practical Force for Change." *Practical Matters Journal: A Journal of Religious Practices and Practical Theology*, Emory University, 2020. practicalmattersjournal.org; and, "Oxford Bibliography Article: Mohandas K. Gandhi" (Oxford University Press, 2019). She has served on many boards, including the Board of Trustees of the Parliament of the World's Religions. Howard has received a Fulbright- Nehru grant (2024-2025) and is also a TedX speaker: https://www.ted.com/talks/veena_howard_truth_force_love_force.

Dr. Raja Rosenhagen



Dr. Rosenhagen [a.k.a. Dr. Raja] joined the Philosophy Department this fall to support, further develop, and teach in the PAX program and in philosophy. Prior to joining, he served as Associate Professor of Philosophy, and as Associate Dean of Academic Affairs at Ashoka University, India's premier liberal arts university in Sonapat, India, and, during an extended sabbatical, as the University of Pittsburgh's inaugural Bhagawan Vasu Pujya Swami Potts-doctoral Fellow in Jain Studies. His training encompasses analytic philosophy, history of western philosophy, Indian philosophy, and Indian languages. He is a certified philosophical counsellor and has some training in Ayurveda (one school of traditional Indian medicine). Dr. Raja is looking at Peace and Conflict Studies (which he prefers to call Peace and Nonviolence Studies) from a philosophical point of view. In his classes, he focuses on how to look at others justly, with love, kindness and compassion, and on ways implementing ideas from Gandhi, the Jains, Hindus, and other Indian traditions into our collective efforts toward positive peace. Beginning in Spring 2025, he has been appointed Fresno State's Coordinator of Peace and Nonviolence Studies. "I was thrilled to join the Philosophy Department of Fresno State University. That Fresno State houses an endowed M. K. Gandhi Center for Inner Peace and Sarvodaya, has an endowment related to Jain and Hindu Studies, a PAX program, and colleagues that work on interesting topics and in interdisciplinary ways played a major role in my decision to come to Fresno. For me, this position beautifully aligns with my philosophical interests and allows me to engage with students in an area—peace and nonviolence—that I find (and I hope you agree with me on this) both important and meaningful."



Highlights of the Activities at Fresno State

The Center's grand opening on October 18, 2023, was a resounding success, attracting over 200 attendees, including dignitaries such as the Consul General of India, the university president and leadership, the dean of the College of Arts and Humanities, shoulder-to-shoulder with students, faculty, and community members. The event featured cultural programming by local elementary and middle school students. The opening garnered media attention from ABC News and other local outlets, elevating Fresno State's reputation as a leader in promoting peace and justice. A public event was attended by over two hundred students, faculty, staff, community members, and city officials.



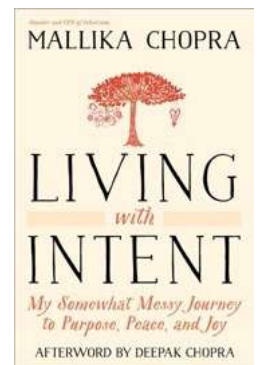
President Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval addressing the community members.

The M.K. Gandhi Center has a dedicated space in the Fresno State Library. This space houses a complete set of Gandhi's Collected Works, a growing collection of donated books, and select graphic design pieces created by students. The library has ensured that the Center is accessible to the campus and the wider Fresno community.

Presidential Lecture Series



On the same night, the President's Office and the Center co-hosted Mallika Chopra, author and daughter of Deepak Chopra as the keynote speaker of the Presidential Lecture Series. This event, attended by over 150 people in person and online, provided valuable insights into cultivating inner peace and living with intent.





Book Circle: Living with Intent



A four-session book circle on Mallika Chopra's "Living with Intent" further explored these themes, hosted by the Office of IDEAS for Faculty Excellence. Faculty and staff met to discuss Chopra's book to learn how to integrate meditation practices and how to live with purpose, peace, and joy in their own lives.

Multimedia Presence

Dr. Veena Howard worked with University Marketing staff to design a logo that incorporates the Gandhi Center's values. On the side is a timeline of the iterations of the logo until the final one was selected, matching the values of the Center, with Fresno State colors. Additionally, Fresno State journalism students were hired to capture the Center's events keep the website, <https://cah.fresnostate.edu/philosophy/centers/gandhicenter/index.html>, up to date with events and learning opportunities for the community.



"I congratulate Fresno State, Dr. Sandoval and all of the folks who have allowed Fresno State to be the first and may it be the beginning of the Academy recognizing the Gandhian intervention of the 20th century of the science of nonviolence. The most significant intervention of the 20th century and the one most urgently needed by all of the human race."

Rev. James M. Lawson Jr.
Civil Rights Leader and University Professor



"His [Gandhi's] philosophy of nonviolence changed the course of human history by illuminating a path for lasting and meaningful social change... His ideals of peace, equity, and Sarvodaya are intertwined in the vision and values that drive Fresno State's mission."

Dr. Saul Jiménez-Sandoval
President, California State University, Fresno

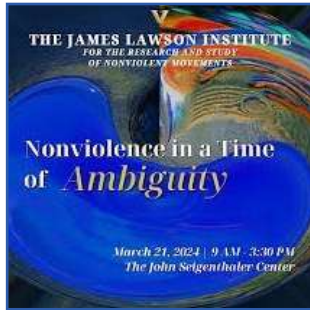


"The vision of the M.K. Gandhi Center: Inner Peace and Sarvodaya is consistent with Fresno State's educational values of supporting all students, faculty, and staff, and finding creative ways in helping them to advance toward their goals. Gandhi's avowal for the care of all (Sarvodaya) almost 100 years ago is still relevant today, and it will remain relevant in the future. It invites our current generations to work toward uplifting all. The practice of cultivating personal inner peace is essential to social transformation. Fresno State shares the Gandhi Center's dedication to the values of peace, equity, dignity, and care for all. Congratulations on the opening of the Center in the library."

Dr. Xuanning Fu
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
California State University, Fresno



Relevant Research & Talks



Keynote Address (2024)

Dr. Howard gave the keynote address at the newly endowed James Lawson Institute's inaugural symposium at Vanderbilt University. The topic of the lecture was "Why are We Afraid of Non-Violence?"



UCLA (2023)

In June, Dr. Howard presented "Gandhi and his Practical Anekāntavāda for Sarvodaya" at UCLA.



Religions Journal (2023)

"The Nonviolence Conundrum: Political Peace and Personal Karma in Jain and Hindu Traditions", a peer-reviewed and open source publication.



Vedanta Group (2024)

Dr. Howard delivered "Dharma Dilemma in Contemporary Times, a community talk to the Vedanta Group, Fresno, May 2024.



Arihanta Academy (2024)

"Karma Yoga in Jainism: Shrimad Rajchandra's Integrating Renunciation and Action" was presented by Dr. Howard online at the Arihanta Academy and can be watched on demand.



Interview on "Gandhi's Global Legacy" (2024)

Dr. Howard discussed her book - *Gandhi's Global Legacy: Moral Methods and Modern Challenges* - with Dr. Raj Balkaran, professor at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies.



Relevant Research & Talks



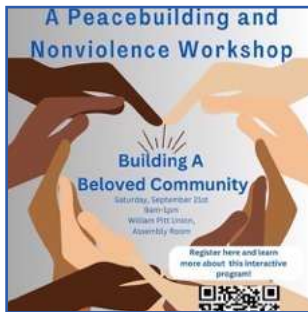
Samavsaran (2024)

California State University, Long Beach held a two-day conference on Jainism and the environment. Dr. Howard's talk: "Understanding the Jain Doctrine of Ahimsā: Not Just Literal Practice but a Philosophical and Ethical Worldview."



Dr. Rosenhagen gave a talk at Fresno State (2024)

entitled "Thinking with the Jains: Intellectual Non-Violence." In his talk, he critically discussed the relation between various Jain theses and the idea of intellectual nonviolence.



Peacebuilding and Nonviolence Workshop (2024)

Dr. Rosenhagen served as an invited speaker at a Peacebuilding and Nonviolence Workshop called "Building a Beloved Community" hosted at the University of Pittsburgh. In his talk, he productively combined approaches from Jane Addams, Iris Murdoch, Marshall Rosenberg, and the Jains.



Parliament of the World's Religions (2023)

"What Being a Hindu Means to Me Today," was presented in Chicago at an academic panel, Parliament of the World's Religions. With accompanying students, Dr. Howard presented at a plenary session, two symposiums, and four-panel discussions.



22nd Dharma Academy of North America Conference (2023)

Dr. Howard led the "Roundtable: The Dharma of the Scholar-Practitioner: Pedagogy, History, Philosophy, and Controversies" discussion at the DANAM Conference in Austin, TX. She also serves as the Steering Committee Vice Chair, identifying strategies for and undertaking the recovery, reclamation, and reconstitution of Dharma traditions for the contemporary global era, with an initial focus on Hindu Dharma and subsequently on other Dharma traditions.



Impact on Students and Relevant Classes Taught.

PHIL 170T (Philosophy of Peace and Nonviolence) - senior seminar, Fall 2024

This course examines how philosophical ideas and religious principles have been used to mobilize effective nonviolent action for confronting social, political, and personal conflicts all over the globe. Eastern and Western classical religious and philosophical sources, including Jain, Hindu, and Buddhist, as well as Gandhian methods, are considered as we critically evaluate the theory and practice of nonviolence in building a culture of peace. We also examine select historical figures and movements from recent history to evaluate the efficacy of nonviolence in our current contexts. This seminar centers around the question of whether philosophical ideas, and religious virtues have the potential to transform our personal lives and effect social, economic, and political change. More specifically, through studying writings from various philosophical traditions and activist thinkers, we examine how the principle of nonviolence—variously known as truth-force, love-force, nonviolent direct action, and resistance—has historically been used to bring positive change in personal, social, and political conditions. Students study Eastern and Western classical religious and philosophical texts, Jain, Hindu, and Buddhist thought, Gandhian methods, and writings from various sources to critically evaluate the role of ethical principles in building a culture of peace.



Artwork by: Stefani Nolasco

By analyzing academic and popular writings from a variety of disciplines and genres—philosophy, literature, speeches, autobiography, and dialogue—and audiovisual resources, the course explores the following questions: how do we define peace and nonviolence? what is the connection between nonviolence and peace? Does the study of philosophy have the potential to transform the way we think and act? Furthermore, through select examples of philosophers, thinkers, and activists, we will explore how philosophical ideas and moral principles enable the cultivation of personal peace and, in turn, the capacity to address various challenges ranging from the personal, social, and ecological to the political. For the research project, we focus on the works of thinkers and activists, especially understudied female leaders. In addition to critically analyzing ideas, each student are given an opportunity to “experiment” with any philosophical idea(s) to test its efficacy in transforming oneself or effecting social change.



Impact on Students and Relevant Classes Taught

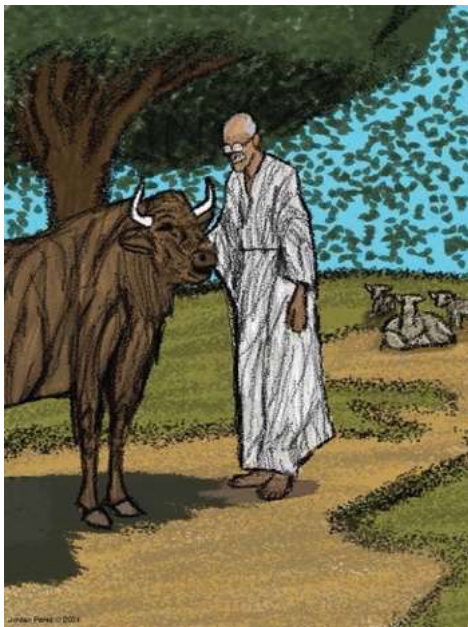
PHIL/ASAM 108 - Jain, Hindu, and Asian American Religions, Spring 2024, Dr. Howard

The focus was interdisciplinary and involved a broader engagement with different departments at Fresno State. Students in this course belong to different departments—from philosophy, art, and literature to social science and health.

The course is consistently over-enrolled, with around 28 students. In their assignments and presentations, students reported on their experiences learning about the practices and principles of ahimsa, dharma, yoga, and the unity of all beings, and they also grappled with the misunderstanding and misinformation about these traditions in the USA.



Artwork by: AshlyYang



Artwork by: Jordan Perez

PAX 100 (Peace and Conflict Studies), Fall 2024, Dr. Rosenhagen

We focus on how the notions of peace and nonviolence have shaped the thinking and acting of some of the most famous peace activists of the past two centuries. We emphasize the thinkers and activists that are memorialized in the university's Peace Garden and investigate different ways in which they have conceptualized and implemented the struggle for peace and justice through nonviolent means.

PHIL 108 / ASAM 108 (Jain, Hindu, and Asian-American Religions), Fall 2024, Dr. Rosenhagen

Dr. Rosenhagen also taught PHIL 1 [Introduction to Philosophy], which contained a unit on Indian conceptions of the self. In it, Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain conceptions of the self were discussed.

We discuss features of the Asian-American experience, introduce a variety of Asian religious traditions—notably Jainism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism—and reflect on the [at times radicalized] reception of these religious traditions in the U.S. The overall aim is to familiarize students with various Asian-American conceptions of the self and the world, the associated ethical outlooks that inform Asian-American identities, to gain cultural competency, and to develop ways to challenge discriminatory tendencies.



Student Participation in the International Conferences

Parliament of the World's Religions: August 15-18, 2023

Six of our students attended the 9th Parliament of the World's Religions. Thousands of individuals from diverse backgrounds and from over twenty faith traditions attended the Parliament. Faith Van Hoven (philosophy major and currently our ASI president) presented research from Hindu and Jain traditions on the youth perspectives on the Global Ethic initiative. Shailey Shah (Student at Fresno State's Honors College), who practices the Jain tradition, presented on a scholarly panel on the good practices in Jain and Hindu traditions. Dr. Howard applied for IRA funds from Fresno State to support students' travel and registration.

Dr. Howard presented at a plenary session, two symposiums, and four-panel discussions, including one panel with Fresno State student Shailey Shah. Using her experience studying Asian religious traditions, she brought insight to events involving discussions of Food Ethics, Hinduism, Kasturba Gandhi, and Global Ethics.



“It’s very important for students (and young people in general) to expand their horizons, and the parliament is a great event that does this. You meet people from across the world, from very different cultures, with very different eyes and thinking, and meeting and talking to these people will expand the world 10,000-percent for these young people. It’s a great character-building event.”

Valentino Di Pietro Hernandez
English Creative Writing Major and Philosophy Minor.

Students and faculty at the forefront of inter-religious exchange at the Parliament of the World's Religions





“It was very enriching to participate in the aforementioned panel as a student panelist. For one, I was able to share information regarding Jain food customs and how Jain ideologies provide a framework for sustainable, conscientious food consumption. Additionally, I was able to learn a lot from the other panelists regarding food waste and the role of food in fostering diplomacy.”

Shailey Shah
Philosophy Major.

“When I first heard of the concept of Ahimsa, I did not understand how powerful it was until I read about Gandhi’s actions with this Jain Principle. I remember hearing about it first in my *Philosophy in Action* class with Dr. Howard, and it inspired me to look at what I am doing and how it affects those around me. With Gandhi, he took a principle and made an action. He proved that religious concepts and principles require effort and adherence, but when a person believes and sticks to something so firmly, it can create a movement that will inspire students for years to come.”

Faith Van Hoven
Philosophy Major
President, Associated Student Incorporated.



Did you Know?

At Fresno State, Ms. Van Hoven has participated in Speech and Debate, the Philosophy Club, the Filipino Club, and the Honors Program. She taught taekwondo at Break the Barrier and volunteered with the Marjaree Mason Center, but now works at a local law firm. After graduation, Faith hopes to get her Masters in philosophy and then her Juris Doctor.



Hindu Temple Diwali Visit with Students (Fresno)

To witness this year's festival of Diwali, the pan-Indian festival of light, Professor Howard, Professor Rosenhagen, and some students visited the BPAS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir on 8105 N. Maple Ave. Students witnessed a fire ceremony [aarti], marveled at the decorations and the food donations [some of them intricately carved], were introduced to the various murtis [statues of divine figures as well as statues of the founder of this particular sampradaaya-teacher-student lineage], learned about various Hindu festivals that are being celebrated throughout the year through the help of displays set up in the temple and explained by various Hindu students from the surrounding areas, and enjoyed an Indian meal. The visit was interesting and educational, the students were welcomed very warmly and much enjoyed the event. Special thanks to Shreya and Naakshi for taking such good care of us!



“Diwali for me was an opportunity to learn about a culture we had touched upon in class. Seeing all the beautiful colors and how welcoming the people were made the experience amazing. I did not feel out of place and the coordinators went out of their way to make us feel included.”

- Jesus Nieblas, B. Sc. Electrical Engineering,
Senior [the class in question: PHIL 1 - Intro to Philosophy (Prof. Rosenhagen)]

“Experiencing the celebration of Diwali firsthand was an incredible opportunity. Everyone was so welcoming and open to educating us in their beautiful culture. As a dual language elementary teacher, I was able to share what I learned with my current students and will continue to share with my future students, to show them the beauty in diversity.”

- Yessica Nieblas, M.A. Multilingual, Multicultural Education



Gandhi Film Screening

Organization: Dr. Raja Rosenhagen, Philosophy Department (PAX Program)

Sponsored by the M. K. Gandhi Center for Inner Peace and Sarvodaya

Note: This screening is for enrolled Philosophy and PAX students & part of the class curriculum
Register here: <https://www.eventregistrationtool.com/register/6da7a9d4-7701-4a71-92d2-b67c0c08e9>

On October 16, Dr. Rosenhagen organized a screening of Richard Attenborough’s iconic biopic “Gandhi” (1982) for students enrolled in PAX 100, PHIL 1, and PHIL 108 / ASAM 108. Funding for food and drinks for students was sponsored by the M. K. Gandhi Center. More than 35 students attended the event. See below for some student reflections.

Student Reflections

“I had heard of Gandhi only a few times before and had assumed he was some sort of religious person like Jesus or Muhammad, prior to seeing this movie. I relate him more to figures like Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., Pancho Villa or Cesar Chavez now that I’ve learned something about him. Now I understand that Gandhi was an exceptional person who gave his all for India, and he is huge.” –Jesus Abundis

“[Gandhi] stood up for peace, non-violence, and justice. He was a big advocate for social justice, economic independence, and most importantly, the unity of India. Throughout the film, we see the different things that he must overcome, from losing his wife, to almost dying of starvation, he goes through a lot, but that is also why he is loved by many.” –Janeth Rincon Chavez

“Before watching this film, my initial knowledge on Gandhi was limited to himself being a peacemaker and a leader of a revolutionary point in Indian history. After watching the film, I realized that there was much more to Gandhi’s story. He was an icon that disproved conflict as he believed that peace amongst the populations was possible.” –Laith Khoury

“The Gandhi film was very powerful. I think this movie is really important to watch and I’m grateful that I was able to watch it and learn so much.” –Maya Simone Thurmond



Student Voices

Students of Philosophy of Peace and Nonviolence seminar (PHIL 170 T) wrote OpEd pieces reflecting on the issues of peace, nonviolence, and justice. Some sample articles are included below.

Hope in a Choice Between ‘Two Evils’: How Gandhi Can Help Us Find Optimism Amidst Current Political Turmoil

By Amanda Britter



Amanda Britter is a fourth year student majoring in Religious Studies and minoring in Jewish Studies, as well as Recreation Administration, with the intention of going into ministry after graduation. While most of her studies in philosophy are focused around religion, she is very excited to be studying peace and non-violence this semester in the Philosophy department.

As a young voter in an election year when we are told to ‘vote for the lesser of the two evils,’ it has become increasingly difficult to remain optimistic about the outlook of this country’s future leadership. As recent Pew Research polls have demonstrated, voters have become increasingly frustrated with both candidates’ proposed policies, resulting in a reliance on personal views of gender, race, and religion to guide their vote. In light of this shift in voter attitude, I cannot help but notice a need for a new way of choosing the ‘lesser of two evils,’ a need which I believe can be answered through Mohandas K. Gandhi’s philosophy and method of satyagraha.

As a student of nonviolence in this present election year, I find myself drawn to Gandhi’s concept of satyagraha, developed during his nonviolent movements towards independence in India throughout the mid-20th century. Satyagraha is a nonviolent principle that emphasizes a commitment to holding firmly to absolute truth; in which one does not compromise in any way their focus on the systems of injustice they are fighting against. This then allows for a far more powerful push towards justice, as satyagraha does not allow for using unjust and violent means in order to achieve justice.

The commitment to justice and truth, satyagraha calls for, if adopted widely by the voting population of the United States, could lead to a radical shift in future leadership of the country. Present leadership consists of leaders who have been found to consistently compromise their promises when fighting against injustice in order to maintain power in the United States. But in demanding a commitment to truth and justice, it is my hope as a young voter that the standard to which we hold our leaders will change. It is my hope that in future elections our choice will be more than a choice between the ‘lesser of two evils.’



Empathy, Resilience, and Inclusivity: The Traits of Effective Leaders

By Salud Toledo Ruiz



Salud Toledo Ruiz is a senior at Fresno State University, majoring in Philosophy Pre-Law with plans to attend law school. She is pursuing a career as an immigration attorney with a special interest in criminal defense.

Our world is made up of many nations and diverse populations, all led by a select few powerful leaders. Throughout history, we have witnessed the consequences of both poor and great leadership. This provides us with a foundation to identify effective leaders who empower their nations. Effective leaders must embody empathy, resilience, and inclusivity—traits that have consistently been found in successful leaders throughout history. When these traits are present, human reform often follows. Empathy is a quality that all individuals should strive to cultivate, but it is especially crucial for leaders. It is their responsibility to foster peaceful, welcoming, and inclusive environments. A lack of empathy results in the opposite: hostility, discomfort, and inadequate interactions. A great leader like Mahatma Gandhi experienced the negative impacts of an inadequate leader who lacked empathy. When Gandhi sought a favor from a British officer, he was met with rudeness and the imposition of power. (Preparing For South Africa | Gandhi Autobiography or The Story of My Experiments with Truth) The officer could have turned Gandhi away with kindness; instead, he chose a harsh response. It's clear that he would not have appreciated Gandhi's rudeness had the roles been reversed. Thus, it is essential for everyone—especially leaders—to adhere to the Golden Rule: treat others as you wish to be treated.



Leaders face numerous challenges and opposition. They will inevitably encounter individuals who wish to see them fail, often driven by selfish motives. This is why resilience is vital. One cannot give up in the face of adversity, as many depend on them to persevere. Nelson Mandela exemplified resilience, as illustrated in his Inaugural Speech: “I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society... It is an ideal for which I hope to live for and to see realized. But, my Lord, if needs be, it is an ideal for which I am prepared to die.”

“I am prepared to die,” Mandela’s speech, shook the apartheid regime. Mandela’s resilience was so profound that he was willing to sacrifice everything, even his life, for his people’s freedom. Something all leaders can learn from Mandela: when your purpose is profound, do not let anyone or anything deter you.

Finally, no leader should ever discriminate against any individual. All human beings are equal and deserve to be treated as such. Mandela consistently promoted inclusivity, as reflected in his Inaugural Speech: “Let there be justice for all. Let there be peace for all. Let there be work, bread, water, and salt for all.” The key word here is “all” (Inaugural Speech, Pretoria [Mandela]- 5/10/94). He did not call for justice only for white individuals, peace only for black individuals, or work only for brown individuals. He emphasized that these rights should be accessible to everyone. This principle should resonate worldwide.

It’s crucial to avoid misinterpreting these traits or using them as a façade to advance personal agendas. Ineffective leaders often abandon empathy, claiming that prioritizing results necessitates sacrificing harmony. This notion is fundamentally flawed; many have demonstrated that effectiveness can coexist with empathy. Moreover, resilience is frequently mistaken for stubbornness. While ineffective leaders tend to be closed-minded and rigid, effective leaders exhibit openness and adaptability. We see these traits in leaders including Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mandela, Jane Addams, and Dolores Huerta. Additionally, ineffective leaders often reject inclusivity, focusing instead on their own interests and those of their closest allies. In contrast, effective leaders strike a balance between these traits, making tough decisions while driving meaningful results.

When leaders embody these traits in both theory and practice, nations and the world benefit significantly. Ineffective leaders often abandon these traits to pursue personal desires and agendas, while effective leaders embrace them to better serve their people. It is essential for all individuals to seek out effective leaders who can foster better nations and a better world.



Ahimsa (Nonviolence) and Self-care: A Guide to Mental Health Issues

By Sophia Hammond



Hello, my name is Sophia Hammond and I am in my 4th year at Fresno state, graduating this upcoming spring 2025. I am double majoring in Philosophy and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies and play division 1 rugby with the school.

To diligently practice Ahimsa, which is considered to be highest dharma, law, or sacred duty in Jain and Hindu traditions, one would first have to integrate practices of self-care towards themselves. This would help them to dedicate more easily to their duties of nonviolence and service to others. Practices of self-care look like discipline with yourself: practicing nonviolence in thought, and shifting one's energy from self-focused to caring for others. People might think self-care to be selfish, contradicting Ahimsa's goals like the duty to care for others. When in fact, self-care is vital to the process of dedicating oneself to others and an act of love. You cannot take care of others properly without first nurturing yourself. Gandhi teaches us that service to others is core in helping someone find purpose and meaning in their life. Without purpose and meaning, feeling truly satisfied and content with yourself is nearly impossible to achieve.

Having a greater purpose and maintaining a disciplined life is key to improving your mental health. The times my mental state has been at its lowest was when I lacked purpose and motivation in my life. I would go through my days without discipline, feeling burdened both by myself and all my pressing thoughts while simultaneously not taking any action to produce change in my life. Having poor mental health can suck a person into a self-centered, stuck mind frame that can be so difficult to find a way out from. Having them always so focused on everything wrong in life or criticizing yourself, unable to move or change when they feel so suffocated by their own existence. The best way out of these dark holes we find ourselves in is by reminding ourselves of our duty to others and ourselves, as well as taking practical steps to get better. The National Institute of Mental Health (NIH) outlines scientifically proven steps one should take to improve their mental health.



These steps include getting regular exercise, eating healthy, staying hydrated, maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, having hobbies and relaxing activities, setting goals for ourselves, having priorities, practicing gratitude, focusing on the positive, and staying connected to both others and our inner selves. All of these steps require discipline, effort, and self-control, which are core values of Nonviolence. The NIH additionally suggests seeking help from a trusted healthcare provider; options like therapy, medication, or in-patient treatment have been effective in helping more extreme cases. Many of these same steps are found in Gandhi's teachings. When I first came across Gandhi's teachings I found enriching guidance on how to seek true fulfillment that satisfies me both emotionally and spiritually, while also allowing me to refocus my energy back on what really matters, others.

As someone who has struggled with mental health throughout my life, hearing Gandhi's life story full of lessons and reflections on nonviolent philosophies, it greatly impacted the way I think about the connection between duty to self-care and improving your mental health. Gandhi's ideas were heavily impacted by The Bhagavad Gita. The book understands the complexity of the self, that we can be our worst enemy or through self-mastery, a friend. Nonviolence includes nonviolence to one's thoughts and self. The way we talk to ourselves can be a form of violence against ourselves. What I found most useful from the book was the importance of discipline. Discipline allows for peace in one's life, allowing no space to desire. It is a tough self battle to practice self-discipline, but it is needed for self-care. When in a mental rut, it can be extremely difficult to do even the simplest tasks, like brushing your teeth, showering, or even just getting up and out of bed. That is why discipline is so important in aiding mental health struggles. Without proper structure, routine, effort, and time, we will never find ways to a better head space. We have to be dedicated to taking care of ourselves and take action to day by day become healthier.

Gandhi's ideas on self-discipline outline standards for the discipline required to improve one's mental health. In Gandhi's Autobiography: The story of my Experiments with Truth, the chapter on self-restraint, Gandhi describes that giving up milk was rather difficult for him. But, it wasn't benefiting him in any way so he felt it was necessary to get rid of it. Gandhi's thinking towards self-restraint illustrates an important lesson about self-care. Being mindful of what is healthy for us and having the discipline to cut that thing out of our lives is another practice of nonviolence. To be nonviolent is to be active in preventing violence. When something in your life is not serving you, whether it be milk or something harder to cut out, it is important to make the healthiest decision for yourself.



The healthier you are, the more energy you have to focus on caring for others. The more we care for others, the happier we will be! Gandhi's basic principles of nonviolence provide a path to improving your mental health. The duty to one's self-care helps to improve mental health through self-discipline, nonviolence of thought, care for others, and having purpose. Though Gandhi's practices might seem simple and outdated, his philosophy of nonviolence continues to be an impactful answer to many of life's pressing issues. Both Gandhi and Scientific research support that self-care is not a selfish act. Self-care connects to all our interactions with others and society. Caring for ourselves is caring for others, which is of the utmost importance in Nonviolent practices.



Why Inner Peace is Necessary in the Fight for World Peace By Tatiana Fabian

Tatiana Fabian is a student at Fresno State University. She has an Associate Degree in Philosophy and is currently studying Philosophy-Religious Studies at Fresno State.

In a time of political and social unrest, fighting for peace is more important than ever. Simply being angry at injustices that we and others have been subjected to is understandable and can motivate us to create positive change. However, cultivating inner peace within ourselves is crucial to continuing fighting for peace. Inner peace was vital to peace activist Gandhi and his devotion to ahimsa. Ahimsa is the belief and practice of nonviolence. It is resisting violence and hate, while also practicing love and compassion towards all. This means resisting violence in all ways including action, word, and thought towards all. This would even include violent thoughts towards yourself. While Gandhi's application of ahimsa is usually considered in the context of how to treat others. However, in his autobiography Gandhi shows how to apply ahimsa to one's own self as well as fellow human beings. In his autobiography, much of the work of ahimsa Gandhi did was internal and self-reflecting. By reflecting on his mistakes in a more reflective manner, even those mistakes he felt guilty about, Gandhi showed that the application of ahimsa must be internal as well as external.



Health professionals have argued that having inner peace and practicing peace towards oneself is very important. They have also said that holding onto hatred and resentment can affect one's mental health. Many mental health issues can stem from pent up resentment and anger including depression, anxiety, and an inability to control emotions. It can negatively affect your relationships with others, making us unsympathetic towards the suffering of others. It can make us more judgmental towards them, and even unable to think critically about our own actions.

Built up hate and resentment can eventually lead to inaction towards injustices. I have often seen and heard from friends, family, and classmates who are so consumed by anger and hate that because of the injustices they have faced, they eventually fall into a negative view of the world and want to give up fighting for justice entirely because it seems hopeless. They feel they can't change anything, so why bother.

This makes them fall into a deep depression, which then leads to them becoming uninvolved in the areas like politics, social issues, etc. Once we stop caring and become stuck in despair over the state of things, we end up giving up and nothing gets fixed in the end.

Inner peace is not a way to disregard one's actions. It means holding yourself accountable by acknowledging your wrong doings and improving for the future, so you don't make the same mistakes. In Gandhi's autobiography, he constantly confesses what he's done, and shows remorse for his actions— such as how he treated his wife in the beginning, or his struggle to control his desires. He holds himself accountable and doesn't continue to make the same mistakes. Instead of feeling guilty continuously, he learns to make improvements upon himself through self reflection. Inner peace requires taking responsibility in a loving and compassionate way, so you actually take action to improve yourself through forgiveness rather than just stewing in guilt and shame. This improvement can lead you to wanting to improve the world around you. It simultaneously helps you to spread that peace everywhere to everyone, even toward those who have wronged you.

While fighting for peace is necessary in the fight for justice, it can't be done without inner peace. Inner peace is fighting against the hate within oneself. It's cultivating peace or Ahimsa internally. Once love and compassion has grown inside us, only then can it spread and be grown externally to the rest of the world.



Students of PAX 100: Peace and Conflict Studies and PHIL 108: Jain, Hindu, and Asian American Religions reflect on Gandhi, peace building, and the topics of Karma and Dharma in Jain and Hindu Traditions

PAX 100: Peace and Conflict Studies



My name is Nathan Vasquez, and I am a senior at Fresno State University. Before discussing my experience in PAX 100, a course on Peace & Nonviolence, let me provide a bit of background about myself. I began my studies with the intention of becoming a school guidance counselor—like my father, who graduated with his Masters in Social Work from Fresno State in 2003. However, as I progressed on my path by taking various courses, I developed an interest in victimology and ultimately chose victimology as my major, with the goal of becoming a counselor for delinquent youth.

Before taking this class, I wasn't sure how taking a course on Peace and Nonviolence would help me approach my professional or personal career as in my head, the matter seemed pretty self-explanatory ... non-violence would just mean not being violent. I was quickly introduced, though, to various conceptual frameworks concerning what peace and nonviolence could amount to, which showed me that there was more complexity. A component we heavily researched in this course was Mahatma Gandhi's idea of soul force or satyāgraha. Gandhi describes satyāgraha as complete truthfulness and as non-violent resistance, and as a method that, as we learned, eventually lead to positive change. He also translates the term—and this is my favorite—as love force.

In my professional career, I am excited to use many of the components I have learned directly from this course, but I don't actually think that the applicability of the concepts and tools I have been introduced to is limited to just the professional aspects of my life. The idea of love force can be made to apply to issues facing us in our present time, as we notice injustices in our public education systems, prison systems, and strive for positive change in our community—both on a micro level and on a macro level as we vote, fight, and protest for what we believe is good. By learning the virtues of non-violence (ahimsā), we can begin to conduct ourselves collectively and tap into a powerful force that can help create positive change, which seems the more possible since we have seen the concrete impact that the teachings of Gandhi, MLK, and César Chávez brought about.

Without this course, I would not have recognized the difference between passive resistance and non-violent resistance. Understanding this difference has helped me realize that there are alternative and nonviolent methods to address social issues, as well as interpersonal situations and conflicts, and that we may not always be as powerless as it may initially look.

Nathan Adrian Vasquez

Victimology

Senior – graduation expected 2025



PHIL 108 / ASAM 108: Jain, Hindu & Asian-American Religions



My name is Andy Nguyen. I'm in my fourth year of study, majoring in civil engineering, and I am enrolled in PHIL 108 / ASAM 108, a course on Jain, Hindu, and Asian-American Religions. You might think it odd that I am taking this course since most of my classes are about construction and infrastructure, but in general, I have always been interested in how people's beliefs shape the way we live and work together. I wanted to learn more about how philosophy – particularly: the views contained in the dharmic traditions – might offer a broader framework for understanding what constitutes good work and positive impact. I want to be a civil engineer, after all, and as a civil engineer, I am responsible not only for the technical side of our projects, but also for making spaces for people in which meaning is created in their lives and communities. I thought that maybe, investigating these philosophical traditions would shed a new light on what that might mean.

The learning process regarding Jainism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism has been both surprising and powerful. These are traditions, it seems, that do not dwell on the search for individual welfare but, instead, on living in coherence with others and nature. This idea is very inspiring for me, for example in the context of learning about ahimsā, which stands for non-violence. We first encountered it as a Jain principle (though it is also relevant in Hinduism, for instance for Gandhi). Being exposed to it has made me reflect further on how our work as civil engineers affects the environment and people more generally. Even the tiniest choices we make in engineering can have ripple effects in communities that we may not even be considering.

I was very moved by the Buddhist notion of interdependence, whereby all beings and every action are considered interconnected. For me, this again resonates with the reality of civil engineering. Civil engineering involves structures, bridges, and roads that do not stand individually but are part of a much larger system that touches and shapes human and ecosystem realities. Developing this understanding has provided me with more responsibility and meaning; it has also demonstrated how values such as compassion and selflessness—referred to, for example, as seva, selfless service, in Sikhism – are related to my own work.

Through this class, I have been reminded of the fact that a good solution to an engineering problem shouldn't just serve immediate needs, but that it should reflect values of peace, justice, and stewardship. The study of the dharmic religions has helped me reevaluate my job in light of other ways of being in the world that I hope are just and compassionate.

Andy An Nguyen
Civil Engineering
Senior Year 2025



PHIL 108 / ASAM 108: Jain, Hindu & Asian-American Religions



My name is Brianna Foley, and I am a Criminology Major at Fresno State enrolled in Jain, Hindu and Asian-American Religions (PHIL 108/ASAM 108) taught by Dr. Rosenhagen. I enrolled in this course because I was curious about Indian / Asian-American religions and their philosophical beliefs and in how they differ from my own tradition as a Roman Catholic. Going into this course, I had no background knowledge of Jainism, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Sikhism, so I had no expectations. When we studied Jainism, I learned that for the Jains, everything, even the smallest microbacteria, has life and is sacred. You've heard the saying "karma comes back around." I learned that according to the Jains, karmic matter surrounds us, weighs down our souls, and that there are pathways one can take to rid oneself of karmic particles. Following the dharma traditions and the different conceptions of duty that they present, I learned, can remove the karma from your soul (or so the Jains think), thus bringing you closer to liberation.

Each religion that we learned about refers to the concepts of dharma and non-violence, which are important factors in all of them, including, also, the pursuit of truth. Some of the principles we learned about really opened my eyes to how I should treat not only myself but others as well, to treat my enemies with kindness and let my negative attachments go. I have struggled with being kind towards others who I do not have compassion for, but the Buddhist principles taught me that there is grace in wishing the best for your enemies rather than responding with anger, and that developing through developing loving kindness will liberate one from hatred. From our discussions on Buddhism, I also took away the idea that life is beautifully complex and that it involves many aspects that are all mutually interdependent and cannot even be imagined as existing otherwise.

The Buddhist doctrine of momentariness states that things only exist for a moment. In light of this, it makes a lot of sense to recommend that we should not let hate fester, because what we think our hate is directed at continuously changes into something else anyway. Also, it was said that hatred makes you unfortunate, which only gratifies the enemy – so why let them win? To conclude my experience, while learning about the dharma traditions, I realized that there is not just one single way to live a fruitful life, and I am glad to have gained a different perspective on these traditions.

Brianna Foley
Criminology Major 2025



PHIL 108 / ASAM 108: Jain, Hindu & Asian-American Religions



My name is Ginger Hang. I was born and raised in Fresno, where I am now attending Fresno State as a current second year Public Health student who is also minoring in Asian American Studies. I chose to take PHIL/ASAM 108, which focuses on Dharmic traditions like Jainism, because I was not knowledgeable about Asian religions specifically pertaining to India, nor was I very knowledgeable about different ethnicities from India.

Taking this class has been eye-opening, informative, and interesting. Learning about these different traditions has made me realize the influence of them within society. For example, we talked about Jainism, where the core value is non-violence. We see this value of nonviolence at work in the lives of many famous people like Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr., during the Civil

Rights movement. Not only has my learning introduced me to different ways of faith and belief, it has also educated me about the centers and resources of Fresno State. There was a point within the semester where we went out to Fresno State's Peace Garden, which holds statues of different figures like Gandhi, Cesar Chavez, and, added just recently, Nelson Mandela. As a student who has been going to Fresno State for over a year now, I admit that I was not aware that the place we visited was called the Peace Garden, nor was I aware of its significance. When we visited the Peace Garden, we were able to talk to professors like Dr. Veena Howard and Dr. Sudarshan Kapoor, who gave insight about the rich history of Fresno State with respect to the struggle against injustice. One thing that especially stood out to me from our interaction with Dr. Kapoor was when he talked about the lack of representation of people of color when he first worked at Fresno State, and about his delight to now see it become such a diverse institution. Learning about the Dharmic traditions has led me to not only learn more about my Fresno State community, but also about the different communities within Fresno that practice some of these traditions. I especially got to learn more about Sikhism. Growing up in Fresno, I have been in touch with many families that belong to the Sikh religion, so going into this class, I had some ideas of what Sikhism consisted of—for example, wearing turbans. However, now that I have learned more about their faith and their lifestyles, I have developed more of an understanding and appreciation of the religion. One of the main pieces of information I took from learning about Sikhism was a practice called seva, which is a selfless service where Sikh individuals may provide services to help their community. An example of a service is serving free food. I also got to learn about the diversity of the Sikh diaspora—whether it was in terms of learning about where many Sikh families reside within the world or in terms of the different groups who practice Sikhism. I also got to understand about how Sikh individuals practice community, not just through seva, but also through different advocacy groups. For example, I learned of some that focus on anti-racism, and also about organizations that prioritize teaching Sikhism to the youth. It was nice to see how Sikhism highlights the importance of community and care. I was able to relate this to my own, the Hmong community, in which we also tend to show love and care for one another through acts of service—especially in tough times.

Overall, my experience of taking this class on dharmic religions has made me be a lot more open to different ways of believing and living and has provided me with a much better understanding of the communities within Fresno that practice these religions. Learning about subjects like these, I think, is important for embracing cultural diversity, expanding knowledge, and challenging the status quo.

Ginger Hang

Public Health Major and Asian American Studies Minor, Sophomore year



PHIL 108 / ASAM 108: Jain, Hindu & Asian-American Religions



My name is Jade Gutierrez. This is my Junior year of college and my first year at Fresno State. I am majoring in business accounting, and I am taking this course (PHIL 108 / ASAM 108: Jain, Hindu, and Asian-American Religions) both to meet a requirement and to better understand other cultures and religions. Having such an understanding helps set boundaries and allows one to be more knowledgeable of why people act, do, or simply are as they are. My own religious background is very different from the

traditions we learned about in class. I grew up in a semi-religious household. My family would go to a Catholic church every morning on Sundays, then go out to eat after.

As I grew up, this became less of a weekly occurrence, but the practice of prayer and of keeping some jewelry items on myself to remind myself of my faith stayed with me. Learning about the dharmic religions really opened my eyes, especially by helping recognize the similarities we all share. Of course, there are many differences between religious traditions, but most of the fundamentals, it seems to me, are very similar, which I find quite intriguing when it comes to believing in a God. Whenever I ran into some confusion with my faith, I would look at the Bible and, at times, feel more confused. Learning about karma in class surprisingly helped me gain a better understanding. In the Catholic tradition, the idea of karma appears, I think, in proverbs such as: if you do good, blessings will come to you; if you do bad, bad will come to you. At the end of the day, both the Dharmic traditions and Catholicism suggest that moral actions ultimately lead to consequences.

Dharmic religions emphasize selflessness and charity to the poor with no expectation of a reward, which is another similarity that I see between Catholicism and, for example, Sikhism and Buddhism. As for Jainism, they practice acts of compassion as well, by way of respecting all living things, including insects. I found it really interesting that Jain monks use little brooms to gently move animals or insects from their path so as to remove them from harm's way. The Jain principle of *ahimsā*, which means non-violence, conveys the idea of refraining from causing physical (and other) harm to others or oneself. This idea, too, is shared with Catholics as we are told to love our neighbor. Both traditions emphasize kindness, which in turn inspires me to be more mindful with my daily interactions and helps me learn how to navigate my own daily struggles with faith and with compassion for everyone going through difficult situations.

In conclusion, being able to interlink the Dharmic religions with the Catholic religion has helped me have a better understanding of their beliefs and their similarities with my own.

Jade Gutierrez
Business Accounting 2025



Student Art Project: Care and Compassion for Animals in Jain, Hindu, and Gandhi Traditions



Stefani Nolasco



Ashly Yang



Mali Phanakhone



Jordan Perez



Kevin Vang



Yajaira Velasco



Vince Lam



A. Offerman



Daren Vang



TOGETHER

Taylor



Kamya



Students Confronting Biases against Jain and Hindu Practices

“The term Dharma means ‘to support’ Or as ethics, law, duty, or teaching. One example is that religion is usually a structured theological system while Dharma is not defined in any singular way. Another example is Dharma focuses on self understanding while religion focuses on the teaching and beliefs of that religion. Another example is that in religions there are usually specific founders while in Hindu Dharma there is no founder. Dharma also can be practiced however a person believes they can find self understanding while religions usually have specific practices like prayer or specific traditions.”

Kristen Elizabeth Davis

The three teachings of Jainism are Aparigraha (non-possessiveness), Ahimsa (non-violence), and Anekantavada (multiplicity of viewpoints). Firstly is Aparigraha: Aparigraha teaches detachment from material possessions and desires. Jains believe excessive attachment to worldly possessions leads to spiritual bondage and suffering. Secondly is Ahimsa: Ahimsa is the cornerstone of Jain ethics, emphasizing the avoidance of harm to all living beings. It extends beyond physical violence to encompass non-violence in thought and speech. Finally, we have Anekantavada: Anekantavada teaches that reality is multifaceted and cannot be fully grasped from a single perspective. This doctrine encourages tolerance and understanding of diverse viewpoints, promoting a harmonious coexistence of different beliefs.”

Bennett Lawrence Frost

**Yoga's Regulatory Crossroads:
Balancing Spirituality and Governance in Texas**

By: Jasmine Cabrera,
Michael Sysack,
& Guadalupe Verduzco-Chávez
ASAM 108(02)/PHIL 108(01)
12/12/23

Texas Challenges
modern yogis often avoid the term "religion"

One of the Challenges:
Finding a balance between the spiritual aspects of yoga and the governance and regulations that come with it. Some people view yoga purely as a physical exercise, while others see it as a spiritual practice deeply rooted in ancient traditions.

Raises questions on:
How yoga should be taught, who should be allowed to teach it, and whether certain aspects of the practice, such as chanting or the use of Sanskrit terms, should be regulated or restricted.

Advocates for yoga argue:
It is a personal and spiritual practice that should be protected under the freedom of religion. They believe that regulating yoga would infringe upon individuals' rights to practice their chosen form of spirituality.

On the other hand:
Those in favor of regulation argue that it is necessary to ensure the safety and quality of instruction. They believe that regulating yoga would protect students from potential harm and ensure that instructors have the necessary training and qualifications.

Students explore the American regulatory conflicts over Yoga in the state of Texas.



Tangible Truths Symposium (Spring 2024)

The "Tangible Truths" art history symposium, organized in collaboration with Dr. Veena Howard and Dr. Saam Noonsuk and supported by a \$15,000 grant from the Uberoi Foundation, brought together prominent scholars from universities such as Cornell, Michigan, and North Texas. Over 100 students, faculty, staff, and community members participated in this day-long event, showcasing student artwork on animal ethics in Jain, Hindu, Buddhist, and Gandhian traditions.

"Tangible Truths" was a first-of-its-kind symposium open to the public and students, co-sponsored by the Asian Studies Department. The event began with the chanting of the Jain Namokar mantra and the Hindu Ganesh prayer, both chanted by Jain and Hindu students, Varun Raj and Shailey Shah.

The M.K. Gandhi Center: Inner Peace and Sarvodaya
& Jain and Hindu Dharma Initiative, and Department of Philosophy, California State Fresno

Tangible Truths

Art Forms in Jainism, Buddhism, and Hinduism



This symposium aims to explore the complex roles of artworks in Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism across Asia and throughout the world. Activated in transformative rituals and saturated with tactility and visuality, these art forms are created to capture the sublime. They serve as significant non-verbal communications and they assert their agency, and continue to shape human perception.

Thursday April 18, 2024

9:00 AM-5:30 PM

Peters Ellipse Gallery

Fresno State Library, 2nd Floor

Open and Free to Public

Registration recommended: <https://bit.ly/tangibletruths>
In Person Event (Zoom option available for lectures only)

Thank you to our generous supporters
The Uberoi Foundation for Religious Studies
The JP and Renu Sethi Foundation
ASI.

Organizers: Dr. W. Saam Noonsuk, Department of Art Design and Art History (noonsuk@csufresno.edu) and Dr. Veena R. Howard,
Department of Philosophy (vehoward@mail.fresnostate.edu) - [Website](#) -



"M.K. Gandhi Center and Jain & Hindu Dharma Endowed Chair Initiative at Fresno State foster the values of nonviolence, inner peace, and wellbeing. The Spring 2024 symposium focuses on the various expressions of art that enhance spiritual, religious, and social experiences of humanity." -Dr. Veena R. Howard, Professor of Philosophy





Fresno State Peace Garden added a new monument to Nelson Mandela (September, 2024).

Fresno State Peace Garden



Cesar Chavez

“It is my deepest belief that only by giving our lives do we find life. I am convinced that the truest act of courage, the strongest act of manliness, is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally nonviolent struggle for justice.”



Jane Addams

“The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain, is floating in mid-air, until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life.”



Nelson Mandela

“People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite...” from Long Walk to Freedom



Mahatma Gandhi

“It is the law of love that rules mankind.”



Martin Luther King Jr.

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’”



About the M.K. Gandhi Center: Inner Peace and Sarvodaya

Established in 2022 through the inspiring generosity of the Ravi and Naina Patel Foundation

Vision

The M.K. Gandhi Center: Inner Peace and Sarvodaya seeks to enhance Fresno State's larger education goals by inspiring and providing tools to our students for personal transformation and dedication to serve our larger community.

Founding

Created in 2022 through a generous donation from The Ravi and Naina Patel Foundation, the M.K. Gandhi Center is dedicated to interdisciplinary exploration and programming centered around peace, the betterment of all, nonviolence, and personal and societal transformation. These themes intersect with a range of subjects such as philosophy, religion, peace and conflict studies, social work, business ethics, music, theatre, and the visual arts.



Established in 2022 through the inspiring generosity of the Ravi and Naina Patel Foundation



About the Hindu-Jain Dharma Endowed Chair

The Endowed Chair in Jain and Hindu Dharma is housed in the Department of Philosophy in the College of Arts and Humanities and is an integral part of the University's religious studies program. Dr. Veena Howard, an expert in Jain and Hindu Dharma traditions, was appointed the chair in 2021.

<https://www.fresnostatenews.com/2020/12/15/historic-partnership-establishes-endowed-chair-in-jain-and-hindu-dharma/>

Established in 2021 through the inspiring generosity of over two dozen donors from Jain and Hindu communities.

The generous philanthropic partners of the Jain and Hindu Dharma Endowment

Rama and Narayana Ambati
Madhu Bahl
Sudha Bhatt
Andy Chhikara
Rashmi Desai
Komal and Prashant Desi
Dilbagh and Sushila Gehlawat
Vinod Gupta
JP and Renu Sethi Foundation
Kala and Surendra Jain
Jain Academic Foundation of North America
Monika and Chander Joshi
Sakshi Joshi
Sudhir Joshi
Prem and Meena Kamboj
Vinod Kumar
Pinal and Hardik Modi

Jasvant and Meera Modi
Bhavesh and Ela Muni
Rita and Narendra Parson
Girish and Pragati Patel
Keshav and Chandrakanta Patel
Girish and Gita Patel
Krish Rajani
Ravi and Naina Patel Foundation
Harsh Saigal
J.P. Sethi, Jr
Yogesh and Sangita Shah
Ronak and Mitul Shah
Shashi Sharma
Rahul Sharma
Manish and Anjal Somani
The Wadher Family Foundation
Vardhaman Charitable Foundation



Message from the Dean (College of Arts and Humanities)



Dear Friends,

We are so thankful for the supporters who have made these endowments a reality, continuing Dr. Howard's work educating our students and engaging our community on Mahatma Gandhi, Jain, and Hindu Dharma philosophies in action. This year, Dr. Howard's coursework has engendered not only artwork promoting values of healing and ethics towards animals but has also inspired students to express their learning in scholarly contexts, including one delivering

a paper at the University of Oxford this summer. We are also excited that Dr.

Raja Rosenhagen has joined us at Fresno State, thereby growing understanding of Mahatma Gandhi, Jain and Hindu Dharma in the Valley and beyond.

With sincere gratitude,

Honora Chapman, Ph.D.

Dean, College of Arts and Humanities. Professor, Classics and Humanities



Special Thanks

We want to express our special thanks and gratitude to the following individuals and groups:

In the spirit of gratitude and appreciation, we would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all those who have contributed to the success of this newsletter. I would like to thank our student contributors who submitted their essays and artwork for this second issue.

Dr. Veena Howard and Dr. Raja Rosenhagen: For their efforts and contributions in creating the second edition of this newsletter.

Professor Martin Valencia: Graphic Designer and an educator in the Department of Art, Design, and Art History at Fresno State, and his students (GD 167), who contributed to the Graphic Art project focusing on animal ethics in Jain and Hindu Dharma traditions.

Dulce Cobian Flores: For creative contributions and dedication to our cause have made a significant impact on the quality of our newsletter. Your creative flair and ability to transform ideas into impressive visuals have elevated the aesthetic of our publication.



Thank you all for being a part of this amazing
journey!

Dr. Veena Howard, Editor
Professor, Chair, Department of Philosophy
Endowed Chair in Jain and Hindu Dharma
Director, M.K. Gandhi Center: Inner Peace and Sarvodaya
[https://cah.fresnostate.edu/philosophy/centers/gandhicenter/
index.html](https://cah.fresnostate.edu/philosophy/centers/gandhicenter/index.html)

FRESNO STATE

M.K. Gandhi Center:
Inner Peace and Sarvodaya